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Specification and study guide
are your friends

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Tasting

The skills

- to produce a complete and accurate description of a spirit
- to use the description to assess the quality level of the spirits and identify the category it belongs to

Examination

- describe, identify and assess the quality of 2 blind samples
- 30 minutes

Tasting examination

Overview of marks

• appearance	2 marks
• nose	5 marks
• palate	10 marks
• conclusions	8 marks
total per sample	25 marks
total per examination	50 marks
pass for tasting (55%)	28 marks

Theory

The skills

- to demonstrate a broad knowledge of the style and quality of the spirits of the world
- to describe the style and quality of select spirit categories and how they are made as well as explain why they differ from each other

Assessment

- 50 multiple-choice questions
- 10 short answer questions
- 2 hours

Multiple choice questions

Examination covers

- learning outcome 1
- learning outcome 2
- learning outcome 3

Overview of marks

• 50 questions @ 1 mark	=	50 marks
total marks		50 marks
pass mark (55%)		28 marks

Short answer questions

Examination covers

- learning outcome 1
- learning outcome 2

Overview of marks

• 6 questions @ 5 marks	=	30 marks
• 3 questions @ 10 marks	=	30 marks
• 1 question @ 20 marks	=	20 marks
total marks		80 marks
pass mark (55%)		44 marks

Short answer questions
command verbs

- state
- identify
- list

} a 5 mark question
a part of a 10 mark question
could be a part of the 20 mark question

- describe

} a 5 mark question or part of a 10 mark question
or a part of the 20 mark question

- explain

} a 5 mark question or part of a 10 mark question
or a part of the 20 mark question

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Overall pass

Requirements

pass grade for:

- tasting (T)
- multiple-choice (MC)
- short answer (SA)

Final grade calculation

- mean average of the three pass grades

$$\frac{(T + MC + SA)}{3}$$

Module 1

Tasting & Evaluating Spirits

Systematic approach to tasting

APPEARANCE		2 marks
Clarity		clear – hazy (faulty?)
Intensity	1 mark	water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque
Colour		colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown
	1 mark	pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black
Other observations	*louching*	slightly hazy – cloudy and opaque
	other	deposits

Systematic approach to tasting

NOSE	5 marks
Condition	clean – unclean (faulty?)
Aroma intensity 1 mark	neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) pronounced
Aroma characteristics 4 marks	*e.g.* raw materials, processing, oak and maturation

Systematic approach to tasting

PALATE marks		10
Sweetness	1 mark	dry – off-dry – medium – sweet
Flavour intensity	1 mark	neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Texture/other *	6 marks	*e.g.* rough, smooth, watery, mouthfilling, warming *e.g.* bitterness
Flavour characteristics		*e.g.* raw materials, processing, oak and maturation
Finish	*length*	short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long
	nature	neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex

1 mark

1 mark

***** write comments on texture in full sentences

Two white spirits

- the following two samples are:
  - a ‘Cuban’ style of rum
  - a Jamaican overproof rum

- the main aim of this part of the tasting is to write an accurate tasting note

- we will come on to conclusions later

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Tasting note
appearance, nose and palate

Name of Spirit

APPEARANCE **2 marks**

Water-white, colourless	

This is an example of how to ~~lay out the note. You will need~~ to create your own note and write it in here and make sure you have created a version for your students to take away or download.

NOSE **5 marks**

Light intensity Aromas of toffee, caramel, brown sugar, grass and a generic fruitiness	

PALATE ***(Write comments on texture in full sentences)*** **10 marks**

Dry Texture is smooth, rounded and gently mouthcoating with some background warmth. The feel through to the finish is clean and precise Light intensity Flavours of toffee, caramel and fruitiness Short length Simple finish	

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Tasting note
appearance, nose and palate

Name of Spirit

APPEARANCE

2 marks

Water-white, colourless	

This is an example of how to ~~lay out the note. You will need~~ to create your own note and write it in here and make sure you have created a version for your students to take away or download.

NOSE

5 marks

Pronounced intensity Complex aromas of toffee, brown sugar, grass, banana, overripe mango and pineapple	

PALATE ***(Write comments on texture in full sentences)***

10 marks

Dry The high alcohol is noticeable but only as a warmth and not a sharpness. The spirit also has a silky almost viscous feel Pronounced intensity Complex flavours of brown sugar, grass, banana and overripe pineapple Long, very-complex finish	

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Systematic approach to tasting

CONCLUSIONS		8 marks
Identity	2 marks	category and type

Category

- Scotch Whisky
- American whiskey
- Grape brandy
- Caribbean rum
- Agave spirit
- Gin

Type

Single Malt Whisky, Blended Scotch

Bourbon, Rye Whiskey

Cognac, Armagnac

Not wood aged, wood aged

Tequila, Mezcal

Juniper forward style, contemporary style

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Systematic approach to tasting

CONCLUSIONS	8 marks
Building an argument 5 marks	*e.g.* balance, length and intensity, complexity, expressiveness
Quality level 1 mark	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding

Quality criteria

- balance (aroma and texture)
- length and intensity
- complexity
- expressiveness

} purity

Tasting note
conclusions

Name of Spirit Don Q Cristal

CONCLUSIONS

8 marks

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY: ***(Consider balance, length and intensity, complexity, expressiveness)***

There is a well-judged balance between the mouthcoating texture and the warmth of the spirit which sustains all the way through the finish.

The flavours are light but clear and precise in particular the raw material aromas (toffee, brown sugar. This combined with the clean well balanced texture this results in a spirit with a purity and a gentle expressiveness

But complexity and length are lacking which are features that would be required for this to be a higher quality spirit.

QUALITY LEVEL: Very good

STATE SPIRIT IDENTITY: Caribbean rum – not wood aged

This is an example of how to lay out the conclusion. You will need to create your own note and write it in here and make sure you have created a version for your students to take away or download.

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Tasting note
conclusions

Name of Spirit Rum Bar Overproof

CONCLUSIONS

8 marks

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY: ***(Consider balance, length and intensity, complexity, expressiveness)***

The balance in this spirit is exceptional. Aromatically the raw material aromas (toffee, brown sugar) complement the high levels of fermentation esters (banana, overripe pineapple). Similarly the warmth of the high alcohol is well integrated with the silky texture.

The high intensity and complexity from the nose is sustained through the palate into the finish and the aroma retain a precision and identifiable definition long into the finish.

The overall effect is hugely expressive of the raw material and the important role played by yeast and fermentation in the production of this spirit.

QUALITY LEVEL: Outstanding

STATE SPIRIT IDENTITY: Caribbean rum – not wood aged

This is an example of how to lay out the conclusion. You will need to create your own note and write it in here and make sure you have created a version for your students to take away or download.

Two rums

- the following two samples are blended from rums made at different distilleries

- the main aim of this tasting is to write an accurate tasting note and convincing quality arguments

Tasting

APPEARANCE		
Intensity		water-white – pale – medium – deep – opaque
Colour		colourless – lemon – gold – amber – brown
		pink – red – orange – yellow – green – blue – purple – brown – black
NOSE		
Aroma intensity		neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics		*e.g.* raw material, processing, oak and maturation
PALATE		
Sweetness		dry – off-dry – medium – sweet
Flavour intensity		neutral – light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Texture/other		*e.g.* rough, smooth, watery, mouthfilling, warming
		e.g. bitterness
Flavour characteristics		*e.g.* raw material, processing, oak and maturation
Finish	*length*	short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long
	nature	neutral – simple – some complexity – very complex
CONCLUSIONS		
Quality level		faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding

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